

Training: Don't Knock It

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In 22 years of naval service, I've done enough training I thought I knew and had seen it all. I didn't realize a wake-up call was in the offing.

We were about three weeks into cruise, participating in "Operation Northern Edge" off the Alaskan coast. As you can imagine, the weather was not the best. We had rain, sleet and more than 40-knot winds. As an added surprise, we had 20 hours of sunlight, which made for long days, especially when we were trying to get night flights done.

As the weather got worse and the crew became tired, we noticed more V4 refueling personnel cutting through the ship to move to their forward fuel stations—a path they didn't usually take. Our maintenance control is located on the 03 level, two frames aft of access to the flight deck.

One night about 2300, we already had been flying for eight hours and were getting ready for the next event. I was standing in front of our maintenance-control counter talking to a chief when I noticed a mob of V4 refueling personnel heading our way. They were running—always a mistake aboard ship. They were ignoring all precautions as they forced their way through the knee-knockers.

As the group passed through the knee-knocker nearest the maintenance-control office, the tallest Sailor jumped through the opening, then stood up straight. He didn't see the fire main directly over his head, the one with its nice, sharp edge where the mounting brackets come together. He hit his head on that edge.

I saw the commotion out the corner of my eye and asked if he was OK. He said he was; then he blurted out a couple of expletives and proceeded down the passageway. The Sailor went only two frames farther, though, before we heard a thump and some shouting from one of his shipmates. I looked over to see the individual who just had hit his head slumped over and

Navy photo by PHAN Graig R. Spiering



First-aid training like this enabled the author to help a shipmate who hit his head on a fire main as he jumped through a knee-knocker.

holding his head. As I rushed to his aid, I realized we had a medical emergency on our hands because blood was running down his head.

He actually had cut a three-to-four-inch gash that would require some stitches. All of my training went into effect as I arrived on the scene. We called away a medical emergency, applied direct pressure to the wound, and wouldn't let the Sailor get up, even though he wanted to continue on to his work.

What's the takeaway here? The next time you cop an attitude about having to sit through another training session, ask yourself if you're prepared to handle an emergency. Your turn—like mine—may come when you least expect it. 📌

For more info, go to: http://dmoz.org/Health/Public_Health_and_Safety/First_Aid/.